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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE

(for the period 21 May 1991-20 November 1991)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The report describes the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period 21 May 1991 to 20 November 1991. Its purpose is to provide the Security Council with an account of the activities of UNDOF in pursuance of the mandate entrusted to it by the Council in resolution 350 (1974) of 31 May 1974 and extended by subsequent resolutions, most recently by resolution 695 (1991) of 30 May 1991.

I. COMPOSITION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE

A. Composition and command

2. The composition of UNDOF as of November 1991 was as follows:

Austria	533
Canada	220
Finland	414
Poland	157 a/
	1 324
United Nations military observers (detailed from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO))	7
	1 331

a/ Including one officer deployed as a military adviser to the representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan in accordance with the letter dated 12 March 1990 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council (S/21188).

3. In addition to the above, UNTSO observers assigned to the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission assist UNDOF as the occasion requires.

4. Major-General Adolf Radauer of Austria, who had commanded UNDOF since 1988, relinquished his command on 30 September 1991 and returned to his national service. On the same date, command of UNDOF was assumed by Major-General, now Lieutenant-General, Roman Misztal of Poland.

B. Deployment

5. UNDOF personnel remain deployed within and close to the area of separation, with base camps and logistic units located nearby; UNDOF headquarters is located at Damascus. The deployment of UNDOF as of November 1991, including the 11 observation posts manned by UNTSO observers, is shown on the attached map.

6. At present, the Austrian battalion mans 20 positions and 7 outposts and conducts 28 patrols daily at irregular intervals on predetermined routes in the area of separation north and inclusive of the Damascus-Quneitra road. The Finnish battalion mans 16 positions and 6 outposts and conducts 26 patrols daily at irregular intervals in the area of separation south of the Damascus-Quneitra road. In the area of separation or in its vicinity, 11 observation posts are manned by UNTSO military observers under the operational control of UNDOF.

7. The Austrian battalion base camp is located near Wadi Faouar, 8 kilometres east of the area of separation. The Finnish battalion base camp is located near the village of Ziouani, west of the area of separation. The Austrian battalion continues to share its base camp with the Polish logistic unit, and the Finnish battalion shares Camp Ziouani with the Canadian logistic company. The Canadian signal unit has detachments at Camps Ziouani and Faouar as well as at Damascus. Military police detachments are located at Damascus and Camp Ziouani.

C. Casualties

8. During the period under review, UNDOF sustained two casualties, both from accidents. Since its inception, UNDOF has suffered 28 fatalities, 17 as a result of hostile action or accidents and 11 from other causes.

II. LOGISTICS

9. First-line logistic support is internal to the contingents. Second-line logistic support is provided by the Canadian and Polish logistic units. Third-line support is provided through normal supply channels by the United Nations. Damascus international airport continues to serve as the UNDOF airhead for rotation; Tel Aviv international airport is also used. The ports of Latakia and Haifa are used for sea shipments. Air movement control is provided internally by UNDOF headquarters staff and sea shipments are processed by local agents. In-theatre air support is provided by UNTSO on request.

III. ACTIVITIES OF THE FORCE

A. Functions and guidelines

10. The functions and guidelines of UNDOF, as well as its tasks, remain as outlined in the Secretary-General's report of 27 November 1974. 1/

11. UNDOF has continued, with the cooperation of the parties, to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it. This has been facilitated by contacts maintained by the Force Commander and his staff with the military liaison staffs of Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic.

B. Freedom of movement

12. The Protocol to the Agreement on Disengagement 2/ provides for all contingents to operate with the freedom of movement that is necessary for their mission; however, the problem of restrictions on freedom of movement still exists. The Secretary-General will continue to exert all possible efforts to correct this situation.

C. Maintenance of the cease-fire

13. UNDOF continues to supervise the observance of the cease-fire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, which has been maintained, with the exception of the incident described in the next paragraph and a number of minor incidents.

14. On the night of 22/23 September 1991, fire from an Israel Defence Force (IDF) position located on the slopes of Mount Hermon killed three armed elements 500 metres east of the cease-fire line, which is within the Syrian administered area. Indications are that they had crossed into Syria, from Lebanon. The International Red Cross arranged and conducted the return of the bodies to the families who reside in Lebanon.

D. Supervision of the Agreement on Disengagement with regard to the areas of separation and limitation

15. UNDOF continues to supervise the area of separation to ensure, in accordance with its mandate, that there are no military forces within it. This is carried out by means of static positions and observation posts, which are manned 24 hours a day, and by foot and mobile patrols operating at irregular intervals on predetermined routes by day and night. In addition, temporary outposts are established and patrols are conducted from time to time to perform specific tasks. Under a programme undertaken by the Syrian authorities, 3/ civilians have continued to return to the area of separation, the population of which has doubled since the start of the mandate. The Syrian Arab Republic has stationed police in the area of separation in

exercise of its administrative responsibility. UNDOF has adjusted its operations accordingly to take account of these developments and to continue to carry out effectively its supervisory tasks under the Agreement on Disengagement.

16. In accordance with the terms of the Agreement on Disengagement, UNDOF continues to conduct fortnightly inspection of armament and force levels in the area of limitation. These inspections are carried out with the assistance of liaison officers from the parties, who accompany the inspection teams. UNDOF also lends its assistance and good offices on request from the parties. In carrying out its tasks, UNDOF has continued to receive the cooperation of both parties, especially in observance of limitations of armaments and forces, although restrictions on movement and inspection are placed on its teams in certain areas by both sides. UNDOF continues to seek the lifting of these restrictions so as to guarantee its freedom of access to all locations on both sides.

17. The safety of Syrian shepherds who graze their flocks close to the west of the A-line (see map) continues to be of concern to UNDOF. The intensified patrolling of new mine-cleared patrol paths and, from time to time, the establishment of standing patrols in these areas have helped to prevent incidents. The grazing security fence in the southern part of the area of separation has continued to be effective in reducing the number of incidents. New patrol paths along the A-line and B-line are under construction in the area of separation.

E. Mines

18. Mines continue to pose a threat to members of the Force and to the growing population in the area of separation. The Force is continuing its efforts to make its patrol tracks inside the area of separation safe from mines. During the period under review, three Polish mine-clearing teams cleared a total area of 39,500 square metres. The explosive ordnance found and destroyed by the United Nations or under United Nations supervision consisted of 1 anti-tank mine, 9 cluster bombs, 1 artillery shell, 1 mortar illumination shell, 135 anti-tank shells, as well as quantities of small-arms ammunition.

F. Humanitarian activities

19. During the reporting period, UNDOF assisted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with facilities for handing over parcels and mail and for the passage of persons and personal effects across the area of separation. Medical treatment is given to the local population in cases of emergency.

IV. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

20. Should the Security Council decide to renew the mandate of UNDOF beyond 30 November 1991, the cost of maintaining the Force for a period of six months is estimated at approximately $21 million, based on the continuance of its existing strength and responsibilities. The resources needed for maintaining UNDOF beyond 30 November 1991 will be sought from the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338 (1973)

21. In deciding in its resolution 695 (1991) of 30 May 1991 to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a further period of six months, the Security Council also called upon the parties concerned to implement immediately its resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the end of the period, a report on the developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement that resolution.

22. The search for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and, in particular, the efforts undertaken at various levels to implement Security Council resolution 338 (1973) have been dealt with in the Secretary-General's report on the situation in the Middle East, 4/ submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 45/83 A of 13 December 1990. The Secretary-General has continued to maintain contacts on the matter with the parties and interested Governments.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

23. UNDOF, which was established in May 1974 to supervise the cease-fire called for by the Security Council and the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian forces of 31 May 1974, has continued to perform its functions effectively, with the cooperation of the parties. During the period under review, the situation in the Israel-Syria sector has remained generally quiet and there has been only one serious incident.

24. Despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached. I continue to hope that determined efforts will be made by all concerned to tackle the problem in all its aspects, with a view to arriving at a just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973).

25. In the prevailing circumstances, I consider the continued presence of UNDOF in the area to be essential. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 May 1992. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has given its assent to the proposed extension. The Government of Israel has also expressed its agreement.

26. In concluding the present report, I wish to express my appreciation to the Governments contributing troops to UNDOF and to those that provide UNTSO military observers assigned to the Force. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Lieutenant-General Roman Misztal, the Commander of the Force, to the officers and men and women of the Force, to its civilian staff and to the UNTSO military observers assigned to UNDOF. They have performed with exemplary efficiency and devotion to duty the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council.

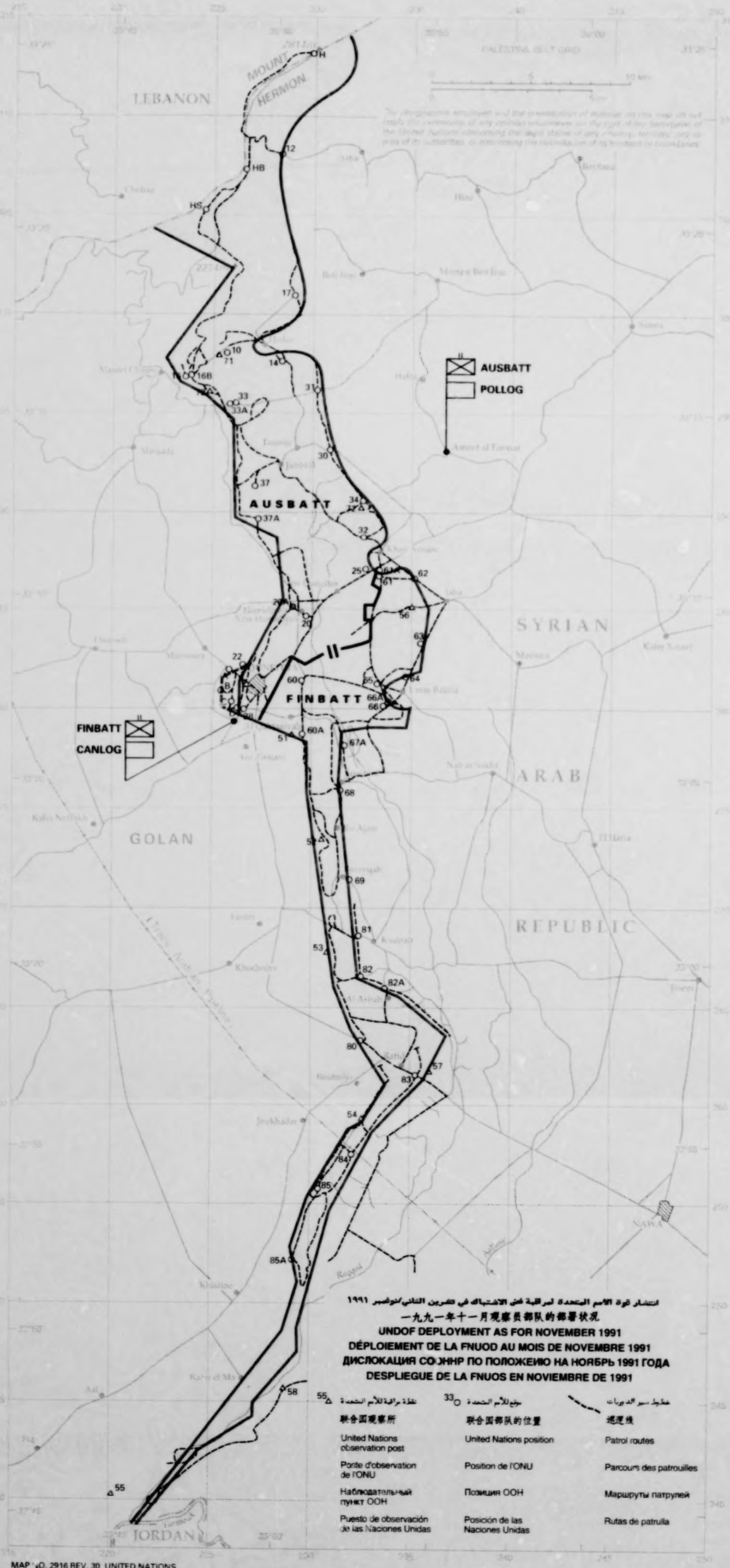
Notes

1/ Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-ninth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1974, document S/11563, paras. 8-10.

2/ Ibid., Supplement for April, May and June 1974, document S/11302/Add.1.

3/ S/17177, para. 17.

4/ A/46/652-S/23225.



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